



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
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AUG 25 2015

Ms. Diedra Johnson
Attorney Supervisor
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Office of the Secretary
Legal Division
Box 4302
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-4302

Re: Proposed Dissolved Oxygen Criteria Revisions for Eastern Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Plains (LMRAP) Ecoregion (WQ091)

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On June 20, 2015, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) published proposed revisions to Louisiana's surface water quality standards (WQS) for public review and comment in the *Louisiana Register*. Louisiana's WQS are established in Chapter 11 of the Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC) Title 33, Part IX (LAC 33:IX). The proposed revisions are located in LAC 33:IX.1123, Table 3 and consist of dissolved oxygen (DO) criteria revisions for inland streams in subsegments located within the eastern Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Plains (LMRAP) ecoregion. The proposed revisions also include boundary refinements for 42 subsegments. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed a review of these proposed revisions, as summarized below.

The proposed DO criteria revisions were derived using an ecoregion approach and are the result of findings presented in a report entitled *Use Attainability Analysis of Inland Rivers and Streams in the Eastern Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Plains Ecoregion for Review of Dissolved Oxygen Water Quality Criteria*. EPA previously reviewed a draft of this UAA report and relayed that it had no significant points of concern about the report in a letter to LDEQ dated November 25, 2013. Based on the findings presented in the UAA report, LDEQ is proposing to revise the currently applicable 5.0 mg/L DO criterion for inland streams in the eastern LMRAP ecoregion to 2.3 mg/L for the months of March through November. The DO criterion will remain 5.0 mg/L in these streams for the months of December through February.

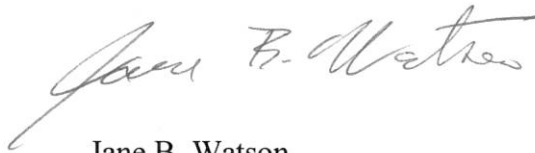
In accordance with the January 10, 2008, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between EPA Region 6 and LDEQ concerning the establishment of ecoregion-based DO criteria, LDEQ shared a draft of this proposed rule (WQ091) and pertinent documentation with EPA on November 18, 2014. At that time, EPA reviewed the draft eastern LMRAP DO criteria revisions. EPA also reviewed the draft boundary refinements for the 42 subsegments located within the eastern LMRAP, the Southern Plains Terrace and Flatwoods, the Terrace Uplands, and the Coastal Deltaic Marshes Ecoregions. These refinements resulted in the delineation of 21 new subsegments. As part of the review, EPA evaluated whether the boundary refinements would inadvertently affect application of the criteria for the other parameters identified in LAC 33:IX.1123, Table 3 (e.g., chloride, sulfate, total dissolved solids, pH, or temperature) and confirmed that the boundary refinements would not result in any changes to where the criteria for

these other parameters currently apply. EPA concluded its review of the draft rule on December 18, 2014, and shared two minor comments with LDEQ, to which LDEQ provided acceptable responses on March 18, 2015.

The eastern LMRAP DO criteria revisions and boundary refinements proposed on June 20, 2015 (WQ091) are the same as those included in the draft rule shared with EPA on November 18, 2014. As such, EPA has no further comments or concerns and is supportive of the proposed revisions. We appreciate LDEQ's efforts in developing these proposed revisions.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (214) 665-6653 or you may contact Melinda McCoy of my staff at (214) 665-8055.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jane B. Watson".

Jane B. Watson
Associate Director
Ecosystems Protection Branch

cc: Amanda Vincent
Environmental Scientist Manager, LDEQ

Sandy Stephens
Water Quality Standards Program, LDEQ